



WHAT'S NEW & WHAT'S NEXT FOR  
**SOCIAL TRAVEL**



## 2020 TRENDS

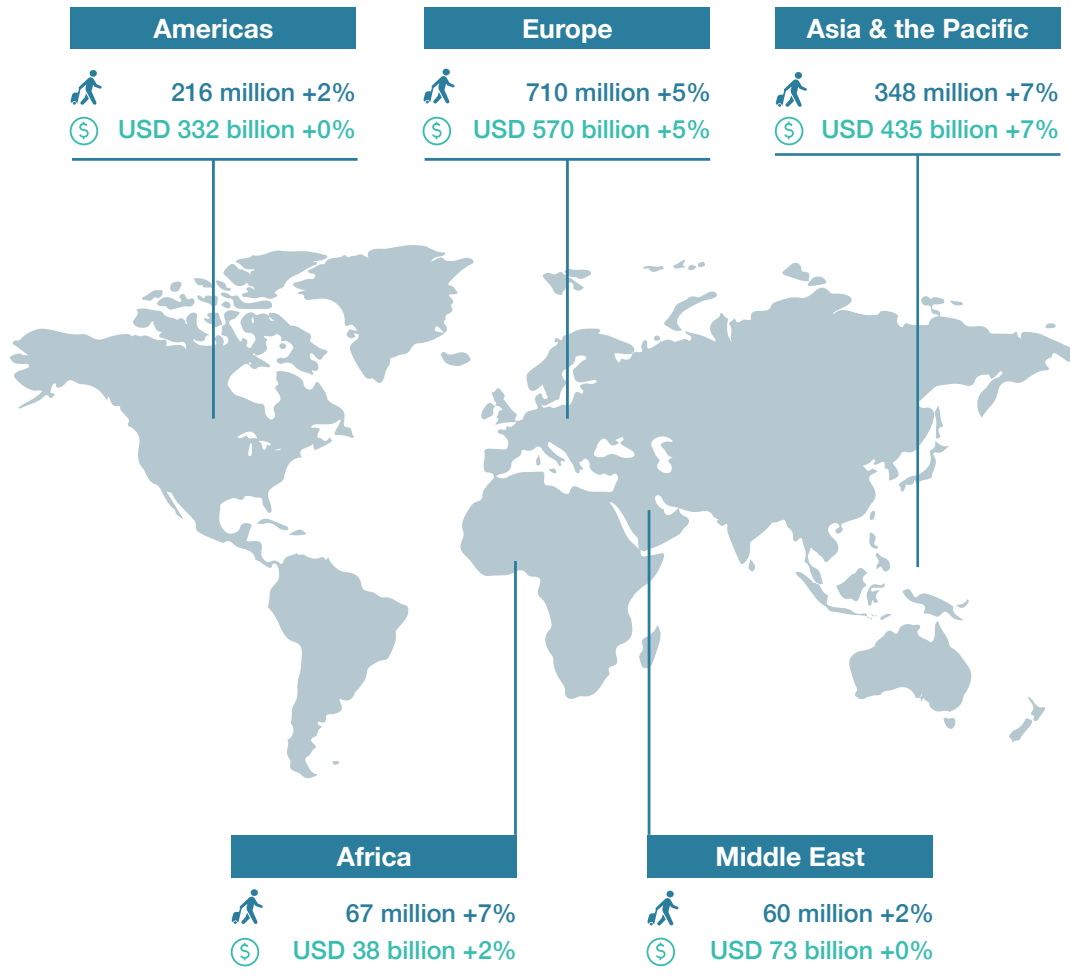
### WHAT'S NEW AND WHAT'S NEXT FOR SOCIAL TRAVEL?

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# WHAT'S NEW AND WHAT'S NEXT FOR SOCIAL TRAVEL?

People are traveling more than ever: According to the World Tourism Organization, 2018 saw the ninth consecutive year of growth in the tourism industry worldwide.

The regions that saw the most growth include Asia and the Pacific Islands (+7%) and Africa (+7%), followed by Europe (+5%), the Middle East (+5%), and the Americas (+2%).



Map of international tourist arrivals (million) and tourism receipts (USD billion)

Source: World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), July 2019

And this is showing no signs of slowing: 36% of travelers reported travel as an important spending priority, and more than 50% of people plan to take more trips in 2020 compared to 2019.

People's travel habits and priorities have changed with the advent of technology and social media. Industry leaders who familiarize themselves with how travelers today think about and approach travel will be better able to reach their target audience as they plan their next adventure.

## WHO IS TRAVELING TODAY?

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Traveling is still a luxury but is more affordable than in previous decades, and more people, especially younger generations, are prioritizing travel in their budgets.

### *Millennials Travel the Most, but Gen Z Isn't Far Behind*

Millennials (ages 24 to 35) travel the most, spending approximately 35 days a year on travel, followed by Generation Z (ages 18-23) who travel 29 days. These younger generations also budget for travel – 33% of millennials say they're willing to spend \$5,000 or more on travel.

Baby Boomers (ages 55 to 75) travel 27 days a year and typically expect to take 4-5 trips a year, spending more than \$6,000 on travel.

*Generation X travels the least at 26 days a year.*



## **Education and Income-Levels Correlate With Travel Habits**

Those with higher education degrees and higher income are more likely to spend money on leisure travel, but that doesn't mean people with lower income are forgetting about traveling. They just do so differently.

Low income travelers are more likely to opt for solo travel (38%), than middle (31%) or high income (31%) travelers.

People with higher education also opt for solo travel: half of independent travelers have a college degree, and 35% have a post-graduate degree.

## **Solo Travel Is on the Rise, Especially Among Women**

Independent travel is trending, especially among younger generations: 96% of people ages 25-34 say they're likely to travel independently.

Women opt for independent travel more than men, and the search frequency on the term "solo women travel" increased by 230% in 2019 compared to 2018.

People travel solo for multiple reasons. In a study conducted by the Solo Travel Society, nearly half of the female respondents (46%) said that they travel solo for freedom, 22% said because they didn't want to wait a long for others, and 15% said to challenge themselves.

More people are opting for independent travel as travel becomes more affordable and it becomes easier to communicate with family and friends back home.

## **People Are Going on More Family Vacations**

More people are taking their children on vacations: 40% of U.S. adults planned to travel with their family in 2019. Family travel typically happens when children have no school, with 80% of families planning trips during the summer, and 42% planning to travel during spring break.

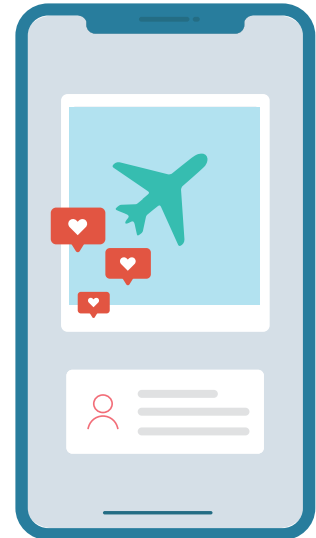
Adults also consider their children's preferences, with 85% of Americans reporting they travel because they want to see their child excited about the trip.

# WHAT ROLE DOES SOCIAL MEDIA PLAY IN INSPIRING TRAVEL?

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Social media connects people to other people but also connects people to destinations. Nearly one-third of U.S. travelers (30%) say they turn to social media to find inspiration, and nearly three-quarters of travelers (74%) say they use social media while on vacation.

But how exactly do travelers use different social media channels for the different stages of travel?



## **FACEBOOK**

Facebook is constantly adding new features and updating existing ones, such as Facebook Stories, which allow users to post short-lived content in real time. Facebook also offers Dynamic Travel Ads, which show ads to users most likely to take a trip, making it easier for travel marketers to reach their target audience.

Facebook's public scandals have not impact the platform's influence: People are more likely to buy from brands they follow on Facebook than seven other channels combined, including Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest, Snapchat, LinkedIn, Reddit, and YouTube.

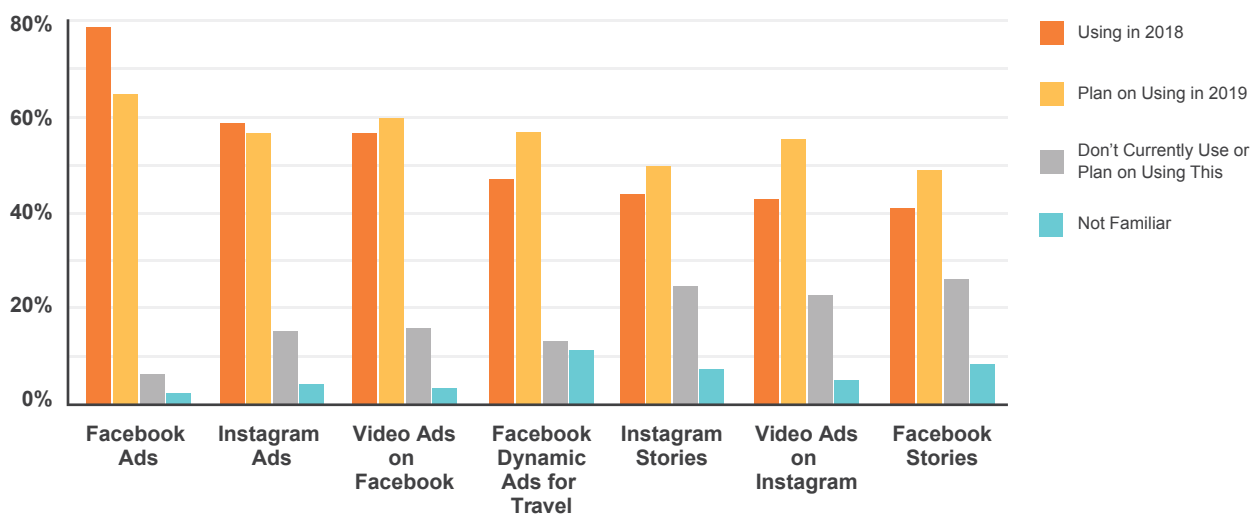
As a result, more than 50% of travel marketers expected to spend more on Facebook Ads in 2019 than in previous years.

Some studies, however, have found that people are also influenced by the content their family and friends post: More than half (52%) of Facebook users find inspiration in their friends' travel posts and photos on the platform.

## What does this mean for marketers?

In 2018, nearly 80% of travel marketers reported using Facebook ads, and approximately 65% planned to use them in 2019. More than 50% of travel marketers planned to use Facebook Dynamic ads for travel in 2019.

### How Travel Marketers Are Using and Anticipate Using Facebook and Instagram Ads



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Advertisements, dynamic ads, and managing the company's social media accounts are all important elements of a well-rounded marketing strategy, especially if the ads are personalized to the customer and where he or she is in the decision-making process.

Using Facebook can help marketers target new audiences, increase brand awareness, and personalize offers.

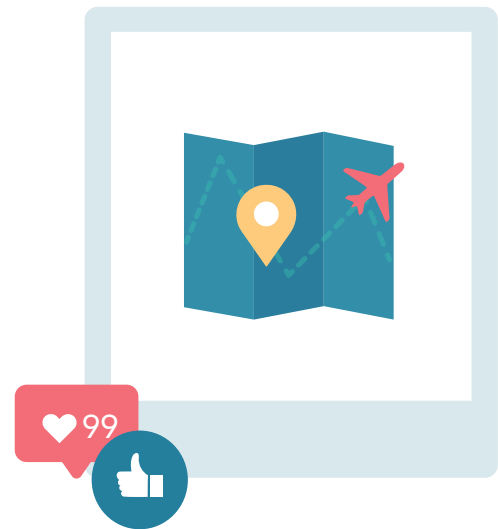
Another important element of a well-rounded social media strategy is not only focused on content the brand creates but also the content generated by users.

People are influenced by advertisements, but they're more influenced by real people's content: **60% of people were influenced by user generated content when planning a trip, compared to 19% who were influenced by a professional brand's content.**

84% of millennials reported being likely to plan a trip from seeing someone else's social media posts.

Travel destinations can encourage travelers to generate content by using creative hashtags, offering giveaways, and making it a competition.

Destinations that use multiple marketing strategies on Facebook will be successful on this platform that attracts people from every generation.



## **INSTAGRAM**

Instagram is a visual storytelling platform that allows people to post snapshots of their lives with hashtags to make the images searchable.

**#travel**, for example, is popular and has accumulated more than **340 million posts**, and more than **two-thirds of travelers (67%) use Instagram to find travel inspiration**. And they certainly have a lot of content to choose from.

People use Instagram to document their travels but also use the platform to plan future trips: Travelers can use geotags to search for photos taken in a specific location can save their findings in collections.

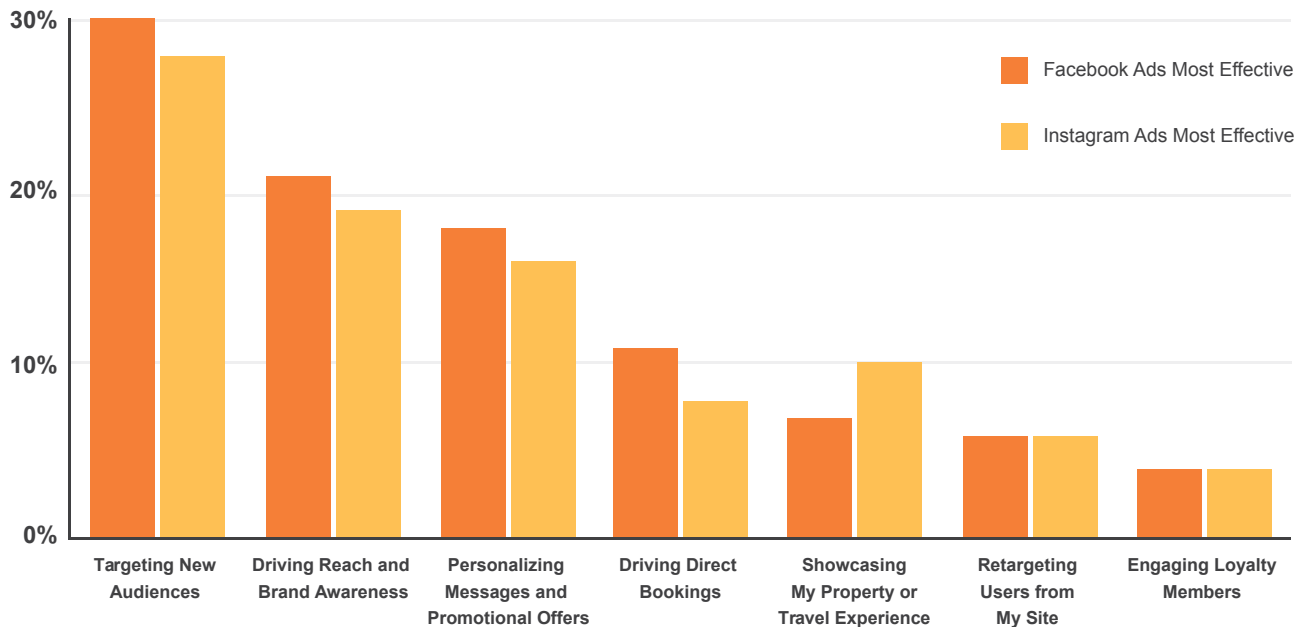
Some consider Instagram an unofficial travel guide, given the vast amount of user generated content dedicated to travel.



## What does this mean for marketers?

Instagram ads are not as effective for travel marketers as Facebook ads, with the exception of showcasing property or travel experience.

### Where Facebook and Instagram Are Most Effective for Travel Marketers



www.sojern.com 2019

This makes it important for travel marketers to encourage UGC (user-generated content), featuring the destination they are trying to highlight or a hashtag they are targeting.

If travel marketers are using Instagram to highlight specific destinations, the composition of the photos matter: 40% of travelers from the U.K. say that they consider the “Instagrammability” of a destination when planning a trip.



Videos combine sight and sound to evoke emotion. For travelers, perhaps that emotion is wanderlust: 88% of YouTube travel searches were for destinations, attractions, and other travel-related topics.

Travelers are also likely to subscribe to YouTube channels that focus on travel. UGC such as travel vlogs that feature personal experiences claim nearly 50% of subscribers.



Source: YouTube Data, March 2014, United States.

Conversely, official travel brand channels have only 19% of travel channel subscribers.

People turn to YouTube to see personal travel experiences and connect with the vlog host and destination.

### *What does this mean for marketers?*

Like with Facebook and Instagram, UGC is valuable on YouTube.

Marketers can also diversify their video strategy by using different types of videos such as vlogs, compilations of UGC, in-depth videos of a destination, and interviews.



TikTok is the newest of the major social media platforms and focuses on short videos.

More than 40% of TikTok users are younger ages 16-24, and experts predict the platform will become one that inspires travel: In December 2019, #tiktoktravel already had 6.2 billion views.

More than one billion videos are watched on TikTok daily, giving travel marketers a new social media avenue to explore.

### *What does this mean for marketers?*

Unlike most YouTube videos, TikTok videos are short, usually funny, tell a story, and include carefully-selected music.

Marketers aiming to reach their audience through TikTok should create unique content that is funny and memorable, while adhering to the brand's tone, and keep an eye on relevant hashtags.



Twitter has more than 250 million active users. Travelers can use hashtags on Twitter to search destinations, post tweets about their trip, and connect with brands for customer service.

Marketers can use Twitter to respond to customers' concerns and compliments.

### *What does this mean for marketers?*

Having a presence on Twitter is important, even though it may play a different role in a travel marketer's strategy. Destinations should still post content and encourage UGC, but should also view Twitter as an extension of their customer service efforts.

By responding calmly to tweets and direct messages with customer concerns, travel brands can establish themselves as ones that care about their travelers' experiences.

## **SNAPCHAT**

Snapchat reaches around 35% of all Americans but its users are mostly younger. The platform hosts short-lived video content that is sent privately between users and live content through the "stories" feature.

Snapchat also has an interactive heat map that shows where people are taking "snaps."



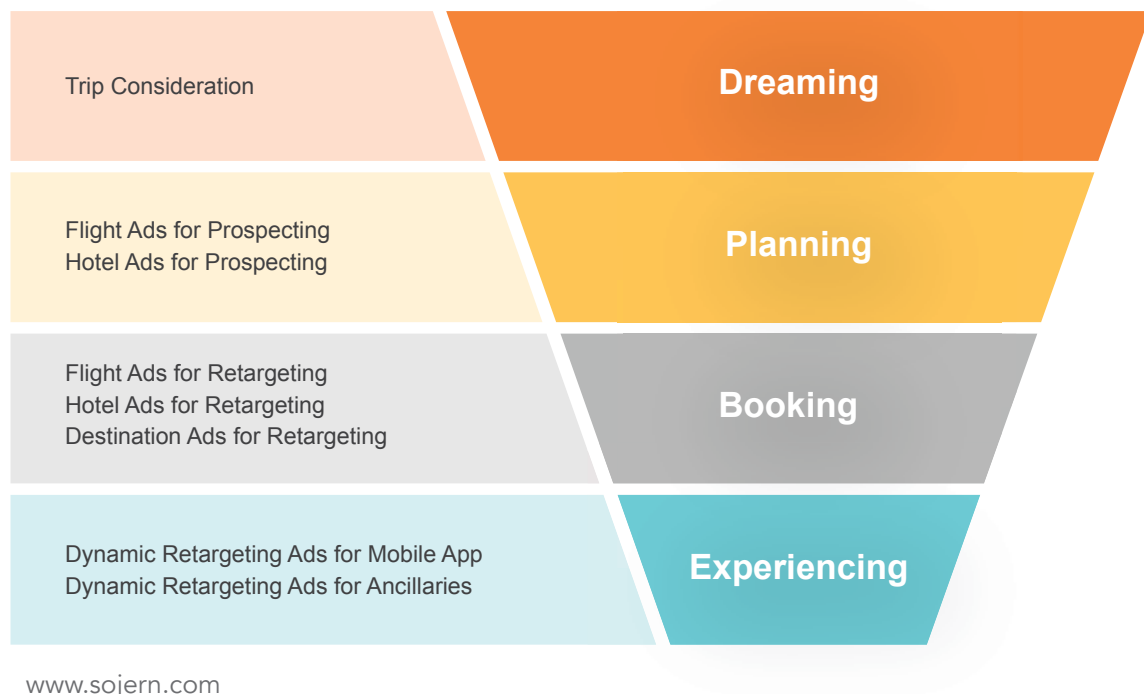
[map.snapchat.com](http://map.snapchat.com)

Trending destinations, such as the Buckingham Palace and the Kaaba, are highlighted given the volume of snaps taken at these sites. People can use this heat map feature to see what the destination looks like and what people are doing there in real time.

## What does this mean for marketers?

Snapchat content is short-lived, meaning it disappears after a certain amount of time, but that doesn't mean marketers are wasting their time.

Like with each social media platform, marketers should consider who their audience is and the stage of the planning process they're in.



Snapchat, for example, might be particularly successful for those in the "dreaming" phase, in which they're considering taking a trip somewhere.

## LINKEDIN

Usually seen as a platform for networking and professional development, people usually don't think to use LinkedIn when planning a trip.

Travel destinations, however, can use LinkedIn to share insights by writing articles on the platform and showcasing their offerings.



While platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat work to show the present and past, Pinterest represents people's hopes for the future, including future trips.

In the dreaming stage of planning a trip, people might go to Pinterest, create a board for travel, and collect pins. They might use Pinterest for the stages that follow as well: 69% of people who pin travel-related content also use Pinterest to learn about different travel companies before booking.

### *What does this mean for marketers?*

If travel marketers aren't already on Pinterest, they absolutely should be: Pinterest's travel category is among the most popular, and marketers should be familiar with search trends related to travel.

For example, searches for "solo travel" on Pinterest increased by 600% in 2018, signaling to marketers to create content on this topic.

Like on Instagram, content created for Pinterest should be aesthetically beautiful to entice pins, but should also be informative



# SOCIAL MEDIA IS PEOPLE'S UNOFFICIAL TRAVEL GUIDE

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Travel marketers can leverage the benefits of social media when connecting with their audiences but should be mindful what which platforms might be better for different stages of the buyer's journey: dreaming, planning, booking, and experiencing.

Facebook can be a good tool for all four of these phases, especially with the dynamic ads featured on their platform.

Instagram can also be a good tool for all four of these phases. People can look at photos from different destinations through the dreaming and planning phases, and get more focused as they move through the booking and experiencing phases.

TikTok, YouTube, and Snapchat can help people through the dreaming phase, and Pinterest can help people plan and book future trips.

*So what...*

## THE CASE FOR SOCIAL IS UNDENIABLE.

Our team can help. We'll sit down and review your strategy with you and offer realistic, budget-appropriate solutions to enhance your current plan or find a path to adoption on newer tactics. Our team of experts are different. We're poised to be your partner in marketing. We live in and care about your community. We know what makes you special and how to share that story in a way that resonates with potential travelers. Our team is dedicated to the travel and tourism space. It's all we do. And we love it.

*Ready to dig in? Let's talk.*



## ABOUT ADVANCE TRAVEL AND TOURISM

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Learn more about our destination marketing solutions by contacting your marketing solutions specialist at [advertise@advancetravelandtourism.com](mailto:advertise@advancetravelandtourism.com). Advance Travel & Tourism is a destination marketing team within Advance Local, one of the leading media and marketing companies in the United States. From local to regional, national or international, we reach travelers everywhere.

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